



# VIP Pitch: Email Teardown

A reader, “Danny,” forwarded me these two email threads and asked me for advice on why her networking efforts weren’t going anywhere. My comments are below.

Read these emails and you’ll see why most people struggle with advice to “just go network!” It just doesn’t work when you:

- Don’t know what you want
- Don’t know who to talk to
- Don’t know how to write a good, compelling email

## Email 1

Hello Danny,

I have received your contact information from [ACME EMPLOYEE]. She mentioned that you are interested in Digital Strategy opportunities. I help **manage talent** and resources for her group and would love to arrange an exploratory phone with you.

Please let me know if you have time today to connect.

Thanks,  
Courtney

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Hi there, Courtney:

Thank you for speedy follow-up.

Yes, I would love to be able to meet up and speak more about **Acme and its company culture, current need, and open positions.**

I would like to be able to invite you out for coffee or lunch (on me of course) to discuss informally about resources and opportunities at Acme.

I do have a flurry of questions and I would be able to prepare in the next day or two.

I’m available this week and/or next week. Please let me know the best time and I can meet you at the Acme offices, if that’s most convenient for you.

Thank you again for the follow-up.

Sincerely,  
Danny

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Hi Danny,

Thanks for the offer, but let’s start with a resume and exploratory phone call. Please let me know when you have time to chat either today or tomorrow.

Courtney

“Manage talent” = HR or internal recruiter. At this point, you’ve already lost because you’re speaking to a gatekeeper.

You can proceed, but don’t expect to learn anything new about the company or the team, and certainly not a coffee or lunch meeting.

A better approach would be to forward this email to another warm contact and say, “Hi Mike, it looks like someone from your HR team is interested in talking to me. Would it be possible for you and me to chat for 10 minutes on the phone? I’d love to get your advice.”

Not that it matters at this point, but this is way too broad.

## Email 2

Hi Alex,

I recently came across your profile via LinkedIn search for **staff members associated** with Widget Digital. I am a budding social and interactive media professional, having worked in a research and digital strategy capacity. My background lies in Paid Search (PPC), SEO, Email Marketing, and Social Media Strategy.

Too broad. You don't want to come across as just trying to talk to "anyone" at the company. It's distasteful.

I'm writing you because I would like to ask for your opinion on the company culture at Widget Digital. Ideally, I would like to connect with someone in the Digital Strategy department, if you're available to **pass my info along.**

Why would he?

I'm looking to join the ranks of a more established digital media company (such as Widget Digital), but before I apply, I would like to gain insight on the company culture in advance. (It's nice to get the inside scoop ahead of time.)

If you're in the immediate Metro NYC area, I'd love to invite you out for coffee or meal to explore this opportunity further. (Of course, meal / drinks are on me!)

Sincerely,  
Danny

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Danny,

**Please send me your resume.** Thank you.

-Alex

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Alex,

Thank you for the speedy reply back.

**I'm holding off on the resume / Linked In submission because I didn't want to apply officially until I had a better idea of 'company culture.' ( I'm exercising caution when applying to agencies/companies nowadays, which is why I'm contacting current staff associated with the organization to get a more honest pov from the inside. )**

However, to clarify, if you're more available anytime throughout this week or even next week, I'd love to be able to speak with you (or anyone you can recommend) who is directly affiliated with Widget Digital, over coffee or lunch—on me, of course!

Thank you again for your help in this matter!

Cheers,  
Danny

Translation: "No, I would not like to speak with you."

Judging by his terse email, I'd guess that Alex is quite high up in the company (and therefore very busy).

Danny should be treating Alex as a VIP (by having a specific, succinct pitch), not a Natural Networking contact.

It was possible to salvage this interaction... until this paragraph happened. There is way too much detail, and Danny simply ignored Alex's terse request. Let's see what happens next.

This person is getting annoyed now.

When a VIP wants you to get specific, get specific!

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I am trying to understand what role you would like to take on at Widget Digital or another social shop.

-Alex

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Ahhh, I see.

Well, I noticed there were a few positions listed on the Widget Digital site.

These are the positions where I believe I could contribute the most:

Social Listening Analyst

Strategist

Associate Strategist

Copywriter

But again, I'd like to get a better idea of what Widget Digital is looking for on a more personal level and find out about current need in their workforce.

If you're available sometime this week for a chat over coffee or lunch, please let me know. Meal's on me and I can meet you at Widget Digital if that's easiest.

Cheers,

Danny

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This interaction is precisely how you flub a potential warm introduction from a VIP.

Notice the mistakes made at every level.

Don't do this!

The best way to figure out our staffing needs is through our site. I can tell you that I love working here. Without your resume I don't have a lot to go on about you professionally. When you feel comfortable releasing that information, feel free to reach out.

Alex Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Jane Doe